



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council approves purchase of Goulding's Lodge using Land Acquisition Trust Fund



PHOTO: Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr., (center) was joined by Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources (NNDNR) Executive Director Mike Halona (left) and NNDNR Principal Attorney Robert Allan in presenting the legislation to purchase the Goulding's Monument Valley Lodge.

Window Rock, Ariz. – Today, the 25th Navajo Nation Council voted in favor of Legislation No. 0156-23, approving the \$59.5 million from the principal of the Land Acquisition Trust Fund for the purchase of the Goulding's Monument Valley Lodge.

Included with the purchase of the property are valuable assets that include 670 acres of land, a Monument Valley Tour business, an RV campground with rental cabins, a gas station and convenience store, a grocery store, an airstrip, and all existing utilities.

"The purchase of Goulding's is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the Navajo Nation and has the backing of the Oljato Chapter who passed a resolution supporting the purchase," said legislation sponsor Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Tсах Bii Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato).

According to the legislation, the Goulding's property has been appraised at \$73.4 million. The Navajo Nation is purchasing the property for \$59.5 million, which is \$13.9 million below the appraised value.

The legislation was presented by Delegate Daniels and his agents including Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources (NNDNR) Executive Director Mike Halona and Division of Natural Resources Principal Attorney, Robert Allan.

Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) addressed environmental concerns presented during the Summer Council Session in July. During the Summer Session, Delegate Germaine Simonson (Hard Rock, Forest Lake, Pinon, Black Mesa, Whippoorwill) asked about the underground structures that exist on the property and the impacts they have on the environment.

"The surface level might look fine, but you have no idea until you get underneath the surface. When you dig up a fuel tank, you'll find damage," Delegate Simonson said. "I don't feel comfortable purchasing anything that we haven't done an underground assessment of."

Mike Halona stated that the concerns have been addressed and the sellers have completed clean-up and removed underground tanks. These issues were cleared and comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards, he added.

Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake) asked if the purchase included subsurface water and mineral rights.

NNDNR Principal Attorney Allan replied that the purchase includes all the seller's rights to surface and subsurface mineral and water rights connected to the property.

"The agreement is written in a way that we'll get subsurface rights on the property," Allan said. "We are purchasing the mineral rights, if any."

According to Delegate Daniels, this purchase positions the Navajo Nation to manage and develop a property that exists along a popular tourism corridor and expand its potential revenue generation in developing the local and tribal economy.

"If you look at the real estate, it's amazing," Delegate Daniels said. "This area draws many tourists from around the world and will generate revenue for the Nation. I'd like to thank my colleagues for voting in favor of this opportunity to expand economic development for the Navajo Nation and our people."

Legislation No. 0156-23 was approved with a two-thirds vote with 18 in favor and four opposed. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren will have ten calendar days to consider the resolution.

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